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Message Text

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73
ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 /063 W
---------- 053721
R 161350Z JAN 75
FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1720
INFO AMEMBASSY DAKAR
AMEMBASSY KANSHASA
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

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EO 11652: N/A
TAGS: PGOV, IV
SUBJ: IVORY COAST: OFFICIAL FRENCH VISITORS

1. PIERRE MESSMER, FORMER FRENCH PRIME MINISTER AND FORMER GOVERNOR GENERAL OF IVORY COAST (1954-56) IS PAYING A UNOFFICIAL VISIT TO IVORY COAST JANUARY 9 THRU 16. THE FORMER GOVERNOR GNERAL WAS AFFORDED A RETURNING HERO'S WELCOME AT ABIDJAN AIRPORT, AND THUS FAR HIS STAY HAS RECEIVED EXTENSIVE COVERAGE IN THE NEWSPAPER, RADIO AND TELEVISION. IT IS TRULY AN UNUSUAL WELCOME FOR SUCH A VISIBLE VESTIGE OF FRENCH COLONIAL RULE.

2. MESSMER WAS GREETED AT THE AIRPORT BY A CONTINGENT OF RANKING CABINET MEMBERS ON JANUARY 9. THE FOLLOWING DAY HE AND PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET CONFERRED DURING A PRIVATE LUNCHEON, AND THE PRESIDENT AND MME HOUPHOUET HOSTED A FORMAL DINNER IN HIS HONOR THAT EVENING. WHILE THE NEWSPAPERS HAVE TERMED THE VISIT A PERSONAL ONE, MESSMER HAS BEEN GIVE THE TYPE OF WELCOME SIMILAR TO THAT RESERVED FOR HEADS OF STATE. MONDAY AND TUESDAY (13TH AND 14TH) MESSMER IS SCHEDULED TO TOUR THE NORTH,
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WITH HOUPHOUET JOINING HIM FOR PART OF THE TRIP.

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3. ALSO DURING THE WEEKEND FRENCH MINISTER OF COOPERATION PIERRE ABELIN FLEW TO YAMOUSSOUKRO FROM ZAIRE TO DELIVER A PERSONAL MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT GISCARD TO PRESIDENT HOUPHOUET. WHILE THE CONTENTS OF THE MESSAGE WERE NOT REVEALED, ABELIN WAS QUOTED IN THE PRESS IN HIS PRAISE OF HOUPHOUET'S INITIATIVES IN AFRICAN DIALOGUE.

4. COMMENT: IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT BOTH VISITORS JUST HAPPENED TO ARRIVE DURING THE SAME PERIOD. MESSMER, AS A HOUSE GUEST AT HOUPHOUET'S PLANTATION IN YAMOUSSOUKRO, PARTICIPATED IN THE ABELIN/ HOUPHOIET DISCUSSION. ABELIN IS TO CONTINUE TO NOUAKCHOTT VIA DAKAR. THE IVORIAN PRESS CONTINUES TO IGNORE THE OTHERWISE MUCH PUBLICIZED SEPTEMBER 22 MEETING WITH THE SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION IN YAMOUSSOUKRO. HOWEVER, ABELIN WAS LIBERALLY QUOTED IN HIS PRAISE OF HOUPHOUET'S SUCCESSES IN QTE HIS WELL-KNOWN MISSION OF DIALOGUE UNQTE.
SMITH

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